Subject Sep 2025 Translation News
Preheader SIL Translation Services (ITS)

SIL Translation Services (STS) works in collaboration with colleagues in SIL and other agencies to creatively steward and advance the translation practices, tools, methods, and training necessary to enable a supportive environment for individuals and communities to flourish and engage with Scripture.

We value: Interconnectedness. Capacity Building. Diversity. Innovation.

September 2025

- A God For All Seasons - **Brian Migliazza**
- Strengthening the Global Translation Workforce - **Viji Mathew**
- Multimodal Bible Translation CoP Has Launched - **Kris Toler**
- New Translation Consultants - **Hena Priya** (South Asia)
- Interviews with Translation Consultants
  - **Jim Kaiser** (Africa)
  - **Mark Bean** (Americas)
- Memoriam - **Ronnie Sim** (1943-2025)
- News
  - Updated Release of Key Terms of the Old Testament - **Peter Schmidt**
  - Francophone Translation Consultant Development - **Drew Maust**
  - Ezekiel Book Workshop Nov 2025 - **Murray Salisbury**
  - Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia - **Bronwen Cleaver**
  - REAP Refreshed - **Jeremy Nordmoe**
  - Literacy & Education Position Statement - **Diane Dekker**

- Coming Events
  - Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation (Sep 2025) Tanzania
  - Africa Oral Bible Translation Consultation (Oct 2025) Online Consultation
  - Bible Translation Conference 25 (Oct 2025) Thailand
  - FLExTrans Workshop (Nov 2025) Thailand
  - Biblical Discourse Conference (Jan 2026) DIU
  - EMDC (May 2026) Thailand

- Useful Links
- SIL Translation Services
  - International Leadership Team
  - Area Translation Coordinators

A God For All Seasons

- Brian Migliazza

For the past few months our newsletter has begun with members of the ITS team sharing what motivates them to be involved in Bible translation. This month we hear from Brian Migliazza.

It has been a privilege to play a small role on the periphery of the wider Bible translation movement. Looking back over the past 30+ years, there have been a lot of changes – changes in the world situation, changes in mission approaches, and changes in the training and selection of personnel. The changes can seem unsettling, but they are also exciting as new people and new methods come aboard the Bible translation train.
It is exciting to consider the changes in Bible translation methods in our lifetime, as Daniel Watters wrote in a recent post. The older generation were pioneers and now the current generation is being invited to join God's mission, but in a new way, with different methodologies. This current generation co-labors as part of a multitude of local believers from all over the world working with the local church. Each generation lives in a different era using different models of reaching the lost and building the church.
It is exciting to remember that God is still the same God that was reaching out to the world in the Biblical times. He is the God who provided in the past. The World War Two generation pioneered in crossing geographic and linguistic barriers. He is also the God who is providing for the present in this era of collaborative missions. God is not only using us to bring His Word to the nations, but He is also including the worldwide church in this Bible translation ministry. The local believers who are the results of the pioneering mission generation are now coming full circle in participating in the next season of missions. And He is also the God of the future, who will continue to provide with new strategies and methods in global missions.
It is exciting to see new, young people like Novethan Shanui (Cameroon), become translation consultants. In the July 2025 ITS Newsletter, we saw his enthusiasm for Bible translation. He said that he came to realize that Bible translation is not that easy. He thought that the Bible in the mother tongue was only for those that cannot read or write in English, those who do not understand English. But he realized that there were a lot of concepts that he thought he knew, but actually he did not understand them. The process of doing translation himself helped him grow in his understanding of the Word.
This is why it is exciting to have a small part in the Bible translation ministry. We are doing this *"… for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord"* (Ps 102:18). While we still have breath, we will (like David) *"…have served God's purpose in our own generation"* before we also *"..fall asleep..."* (Acts 13:36).

Strengthening the Global Translation Workforce

- Viji Mathew *- Global Consultant Pool Director*

GCP at Work - Across the world, Global Consultant Pool (GCP) members are walking alongside translation teams at some of the most pivotal moments in their journey. Several of our consultants are currently engaged in the final revision checks before New Testaments go to press.

In some places, entire communities are preparing to receive God's Word in their language for the very first time. In others, long-awaited full Bibles are approaching completion. What a joy to witness how lives are being transformed by the power of the gospel as these projects near the finish line!

Behind these visible milestones stands a dedicated team of 25+ GCP consultants, working faithfully to meet checking needs across regions, strengthening the global workforce and adding capacity where local consultants may not be readily available. Their quiet, persistent labor ensures that accuracy, clarity, and faithfulness to Scripture remain at the heart of every translation. And we are delighted that a few more consultants are currently in the process of joining the pool.

To strengthen consultant capacity worldwide, GCP is launching two major initiatives:

- Communities of Practice (CoPs): Global forums where consultants can grow professionally, share insights, and sharpen their skills together under the guidance of respected leaders. Please fill in this google form if you would like to join the invite list for future consultant COPs.
- A curated collection of online resources: Collecting, updating and sharing materials that represent decades of experience, so that reliable, field-tested training materials are easily accessible—helping consultants find what they need without duplication of effort. Watch this space for more information about how to contribute to and access these resources.

OBT Consultant Development Training Program - Another significant initiative is the OBT consultant development training program, a five-part workshop series in collaboration with Oral Translation Services. The first foundational workshop was held in Bangalore in June 2025, where participants laid the groundwork for mentoring and quality standards in Oral Bible Translation consulting. The next workshop is scheduled in Chiang Mai, Thailand, immediately after the 2025 Bible Translation Conference—running from November 3–21 for new participants, and November 10–21 for a combined group of new candidates and returning graduates. This two-year series is envisioned to equip a new generation of consultants to guide OBT projects with both passion and excellence.

For those interested in being part of this journey, please email Viji Mathew or Kris Toler.

Multimodal Bible Translation CoP Has Launched

- Kris Toler

I am excited to let you know that we had the first session of the Multimodal Bible Translation Community of Practice this month. Josh Frost and Mark Husband from the Spoken English Bible translation project shared about *The Origins of the Spoken English Bible and Unique Challenges of OBT in America.*

It was an interesting topic and an encouragement to hear about their experiences. The recording of the presentation is available at EMDC, https://emdc.academy/list/1803. After signing in, you can find the recording in the "From Our Library" section.

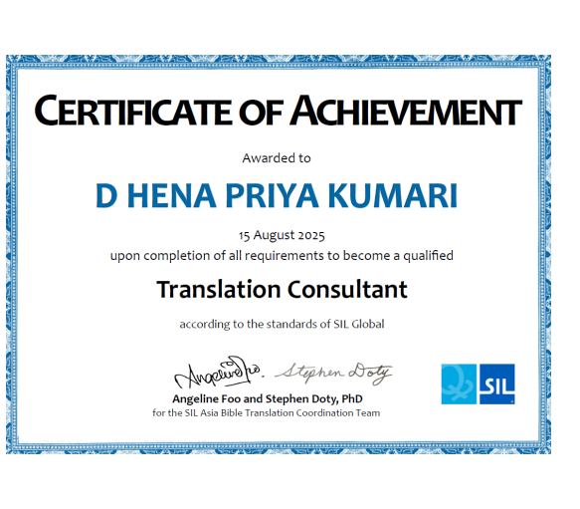
Our next session will take place on Tuesday, September 9th at 14:00 UTC - 9:00am Dallas, 15:00 UK, 19:30 India, 21:00 Thailand. Louie Rose from FCBH will be sharing about *OBT Using Render 3 and AI*. Here is a brief description of the topic: "FCBH and the Render 3 development team are working to position the Render 3 software to work with AI advancements in the OBT space. Louie Rose will explain some of that positioning and facilitate a discussion about the rapidly developing world of AI and its implications for Render users and OBT in general."

Be sure to mark your calendars now. You will not want to miss it. Also, feel free to share the link with anyone that you think would benefit from the discussion. You can sign up by registering at https://emdc.academy/list/1803 and clicking the "subscribe to this series" button.

New Translation Consultants

Hena Priya (South Asia)

Hena Priya *- South Asia*



CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT
Awarded to
D HENA PRIYA KUMARI
15 August 2025
upon completion of all requirements to become a qualified
Translation Consultant
according to the standards of SIL Global
Angeline Foo and Stephen Doty, PhD
for the SIL Asia Bible Translation Coordination Team

Congratulations to D. Hena Priya Kumari (NLCI) on completing all the requirements for certification as an Translation Consultant, under the guidance of her supervising mentor, Balaji Dhuliapada (NLCI Translation Consultant Coordinator). NLCI has approved her application, and the Asia Bible Translation Coordination Team has verified that she is a qualified Translation Consultant and able to work independently.

Hena joined New Life Computer Institute (NLCI), India, in 1996 as part of the Desktop Publishing team. During those formative years, she and her colleagues played a pioneering role in typesetting New Testaments, Scripture portions, and related materials in several Indian languages. Though quiet by nature, Hena is deeply passionate about bringing God's Word to people in their heart language. She speaks English, Tamil, and Kannada.

In 2005, together with her husband, she moved to one of the most challenging mission fields in South India to learn the local language and begin translating the New Testament. Through tireless dedication, she completed the New Testament in the K language, which was published in 2017. She has since continued translating the Old Testament, with the draft now complete and six books already published.

Hena completed the Asia TCDW in 2020 and then continued with mentored checking. Under Balaji's guidance and with support from seasoned consultants, she successfully completed six mentored checks, focusing on Old Testament genres.

She holds a Master of Arts and a Bachelor of Arts from Bangalore University and is currently pursuing her Master of Divinity at ACTS Academy of Higher Education. As part of her Biblical Language training, she completed a course in Biblical Hebrew at Gurukul Lutheran Theological Seminary and participated in a three-week study tour to the Land of Israel.

Hena's desire is to complete the Old Testament in the K language and to serve many communities across India as a Consultant in the days ahead. She is married to Nelson Samuvel, and they are blessed with two young children.

Interviews with Translation Consultants

We asked experienced Translation Consultants, Jim Kaiser (LBT) and Mark Bean (SIL Senior Translation Consultant), to share their thoughts concerning their work and philosophy of ministry. Experienced consultants have been a key organizational resource over the years, equipping and encouraging others to academic and professional excellence while providing much needed leadership and service to many Bible translation organizations.

Jim Kaiser *- LBT Africa*

How did you get interested in Bible translation? I became interested in missions generally when I was in college studying mechanical engineering. As I neared graduation, I talked to several mission organizations about the possibility of serving with them. They all said, "We can't use a mechanical engineer. But you might want to talk to a Bible translation mission about serving with them. People who do well in math and science often do well in linguistics and translation as well." After hearing this a number of times, I thought, "Maybe God is trying to tell me something."

After graduation, I worked for a couple of years as an engineer to pay off my school debts, and eventually took a leave of absence to attend the Summer Institute of Linguistics held in Norman, Oklahoma. I enjoyed the classes, and felt confirmed in God's calling, and continued on from there.
What gets you excited when you work with others in Bible translation? It is exciting when teams find a new, culturally appropriate way to discuss a biblical concept. It is exciting to see someone read and understand God's Word for the first time in their own language.
What is your consulting philosophy? A consultant check is not an examination that must be passed. I see it as one more check of the translation that all of the team is involved in. I encourage them to be looking for ways to improve the translation as we go through it. I am there to help and assist the translation team as they struggle to express the truths of the Bible in their own language. The team is responsible for the final product. My understanding of their language and culture is very limited, and they (along with the local churches) are the ones who are best equipped to make decisions about the translation.
What translation resources do you really value? My favorite resource for teams to use is Translator's Notes. Many of the UBS Handbooks are also very helpful.
How do you continue to grow as a consultant? (What helps you continue to grow as a consultant?) I find it very helpful to attend BT conferences, follow discussions on the BT list and MAP, and read articles in *The Bible Translator* and *Journal of Translation.*
How do you share your translation discoveries with others? I fear my "discoveries" have been few and far between. I have presented at the BT conference and shared ideas on the BT list.
Can you share about a time when you realized you were wrong and what you learned from it? When proposing changes in key terms, it is important to move forward slowly and to build consensus among the churches. Your "brilliant solution" may not shine so brightly for others.
What are your top tips for someone starting on a career path in Bible translation? Bible translation is impacted by a wide variety of subjects. It is good to get some experience in as many subjects as possible.
Share something that you learned from a mentor or from a mentee? From a mentor I learned that there is no one way to consult with a team. Each consultant has their own method, often based on their own strengths. A consultant should find the way that helps them help the team the most.
What do you see as the place of the church in Bible translation? The local churches are the true owners of any Bible translation in a language, and the translation should only be done with their full knowledge and participation. The more they are in control, the better.
What would you say to young/aspiring translators? Invest time in writing down and studying as many natural texts in your language as possible. They should be as many different types of texts (personal stories, advice, instructions, etc.) as possible. This is crucial to understanding the discourse structure of your language and developing a feel for how to express things in a natural way. This important step is too often neglected by teams, and the resulting translation is poorer because of it.

Mark Bean *- SIL Americas*

How did you get interested in Bible translation? I first understood the gospel and made a commitment to Christ my first year in college through a campus ministry. The Bible studies I attended on my dorm floor were amazing: the Bible told so much about God, the world, and myself! What previously had been a closed book to me suddenly became life-giving. At college graduation, I decided that no matter what I ended up doing with my life, I wanted to know more scripture. So, it was off to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School for some wonderful years of study.

While there, I learned that there were so many people groups that had no scripture in their language. What was so key in my life was absent for them. So, my wife and I attended the first semester of SIL and that hooked us. We were off on a life-time of adventure.
What gets you excited when you work with others in Bible translation? One of the ways I think about Bible translation is that I get to be part of what is like a team of chefs working together in the kitchen to prepare the most amazing dish. We work and work, try this and try that, and finally it's ready to take out and give people a taste. Seeing and hearing people's response keeps us going.
Working with the team of translators is a privilege: seeing their excitement, their learning, their growing in their love for God. Working with the team is so much more than just figuring out the right words and getting a product to the printers. It also provides a context for discipleship: going through every verse in the Bible, understanding it, praying through it, thinking how to communicate it, how to live in light of it, and then, of course, sharing it with others. There aren't that many jobs where you can be so focused on that!
What is your consulting philosophy? The priority is dependence on and trust in God. Translation is so complex and difficult, and at the same time so important, that we are constantly driven not only to depend on God for insight, strength, and perseverance, but also to trust him with the process and the result. This informs how we work as a team: we can be patient with each other, realize that each of us is a work in process, and that the translation is also a work in process. We can be free to change our mind and we give each other space to do so. We work together as a team, each contributing unique strengths and abilities. And, when all is said and done, we offer up our work as an offering to God—imperfect, but the fruit of our best efforts, weak as they are. After having done all we can within our limitations, we trust God with the result: take it, Lord, and use it for your glory.
What translation resources do you really value? I really like the SIL Translator's Notes series and the Bible Society handbooks. I also consult many of the standard commentaries such as NIC, Tyndale, NAC, ZEC, and others. I often consult DBL (Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains).
How do you continue to grow as a consultant? The primary thing that helps me grow as a consultant is actually working with the translation team I'm consulting. There are always challenges and opportunities to re-think and re-work that keep me on my toes (and sometimes challenges that require me to ask forgiveness for being a bit too energetic.)
I also read to keep up with biblical studies. I have recently read and benefited from several books by John Walton and Kenneth Bailey. I have also recently read *Jesus and Divine Christology* by Brant Pitre, *Jesus, Contradicted* by Michael Licona, and am currently reading the second edition of *Kingdom through Covenant* by Gentry and Wellum.
Can you share about a time when you realized you were wrong and what you learned from it? Occasionally I realize (or am helped to realize) that I am driving home a point without having fully understood what all the issues are: either exegetical issues, limitations in the target language, or the nuances at play in the target language. Admitting that I am wrong helps establish a culture where others can also admit when they are wrong. We don't need to feel that we always have to be right.
And there can be times when, as I mentioned above, I can be too "energetic". That happened recently when working through Genesis 6:16, describing a detail for the roof of the ark. I was working with a four-dialect cluster project. One of the men in the group was insisting on what, by all accounts, was a misunderstanding of the verse and an awkward and difficult rendering for it. The more I tried to explain the issue to him, the more he resisted. Things started getting tense (at least for me!) when I finally realized that I should have dropped the matter long ago, giving him some space to think and some resources to help him that were more than just my own words. I looked up the issue in nine different commentaries, used DeepL to translate their observations into Spanish, and printed it up for him. Before I had finished, however, he came to me and apologized for not being teachable. I apologized to him for not having stopped earlier and given him time and resources.
What are your top tips for someone starting on a career path in Bible translation? I have seen young people certified as translation consultants even before they have worked in translation, and others who have that expectation. The best way to get a personal, in-depth understanding of the multifaceted challenges of translation and to prepare for being a consultant is to first heavily invest in years of working with a translation team under the supervision of a senior consultant. Courses in translation theory and practice along with courses in translation consulting have their place, but nothing takes the place of long experience. Young people eager to begin their translation careers as consultants are well advised to hold off and get many years of day-in and day-out experience first.
What do you see as the place of the church in Bible translation? The Bible is a book for the Church: to be taught, read, memorized, meditated on, proclaimed, lived by, and cherished. If there is no church in the area where translation is being done, then we pray that God would use the translation process to raise up a community of his people. If there is a church, then they, as the ultimate users of the translation, need to be involved. There are many ways in which they can do this, but it is important that they not only have some active part in the translation, but that they also feel like their voice is heard.

Memoriam

Ronnie Sim (Ph.D. Edinburgh University) served with SIL since 1974, arriving in Ethiopia in 1975 to work as an exegete advisor. From there he moved to Kenya where he was instrumental in setting up degree-level programs for Bible translators from bachelor through doctoral level at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, which became Africa International University. He then worked from home in Scotland in translation consulting of both Old and New Testament work, supervising post-graduate students' research/writing, and presenting his own academic research in biblical studies and translation at various conferences.

Ronnie Sim (1943-2025)

- memories from ***Freddy Boswell -*** *Editor of the SIL Journal of Translation (JOT)*

We mourn the recent passing of our esteemed colleague, Dr Ronnie Sim. Ronnie died after a bout with prostate cancer. Drew Maust and I will miss his counsel and insights on JOT articles that were submitted for review. I have known and worked with Ronnie over the past 25 years, and his earthly departure leaves a big hole for many.

When I started a previous role as International Translation Coordinator (ITC), Ronnie was in Dallas and came to see me. He had a matter-of-fact proposal, done with a disarming Scottish twinkle in his eye: how would I feel about him taking over the editorship of Notes on Translation (NOT)? Up to then, the ITC was the editor, and that responsibility came with the territory; Ronnie wanted to give it special attention, give it more energy by moving it out of the ITC's hands, and ramp it up to be a bona fide peer-reviewed journal. I eagerly accepted his offer. (Sadly, before we got very far, NOT was cancelled due to budget and reorganization constraints. Happily, JOT (Journal of Translation) was birthed when that chapter closed.)

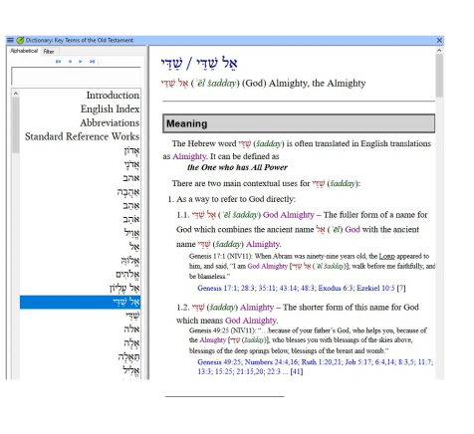
One of the things Ronnie dreamed about early in this century was the establishment of what he called a Translation Center, where scholars could gather and exchange ideas and sharpen each other and advance our specialized work. Though it never came to pass as such, I have often thought of Ronnie when considering the Pike Center for Integrative Scholarship, which was launched a number of years after he first shared the vision with me of providing a similar, special space for like-minded SIL translation scholars and practitioners.

Just a couple of weeks ago, we had our last interaction with him. We had asked him to review an article for JOT and he wrote in reply to Drew that he was near the end of life, and just didn't have strength or concentration. Neither of us were aware of the extent of his illness. Of course, we understood, and I wrote to him immediately in reply, basically as a final personal connection.

This news has hit me pretty hard. What a treasure of a man! We pray for his wife Margaret, and children and grandchildren left behind. He invested so much in so many for so many years, whether residentially in Ethiopia in linguistics and translation, or teaching in university in Kenya, or presenting in consecutive years at the Society of Biblical Literature on a continuing biblical Hebrew topic of translation interest to him, or back in the UK focused on writing and research. The list of his contributions could continue and get long very quickly!

News

Updated Release of Key Terms of the Old Testament *- Peter Schmidt*



Key Terms of the Old Testament (KTOT) is a dictionary for translators and this 12th release has arrived. If you have already used the KTOT dictionary resource in Paratext, then you will see a 'green pickle' update notification for the resource that will prompt you to download/ update it like other Paratext resources. Click here for instructions on how to download/ update KTOT from within Paratext.

For every key term, its meanings in different contexts are presented. And for every verse where the key term occurs, it shows to which of these contexts it belongs. This makes it easy to see which meaning a key term has in a certain verse. It also makes it easy to deal with all the verses that belong to the same context together.

The words that are called "key terms" represent important Old Testament customs, institutions, or values; or they stand for important themes for the message and teaching of the Old Testament. In addition to the articles on individual key terms, there are also some Topical Articles, which fall into two categories: the Cultural Articles explain in some detail important aspects of Hebrew culture (for example, Family), and the Overview Articles deal with a number of related key terms (for example, Sacrifice). This should help in coordinating the translation and word choices for all of them.

In this August 2025 release, there are three new articles and three completed ones. There is also an improved English Index. Note that KTOT articles often include discussions of particularly difficult verses, where their interpretation depends on the given term. It's worthwhile looking this up. It spares you poring over the commentaries yourself.

Janet McLarren introduces us to **"Gifts"** through an anthropological lens, talking about how gifts shape our relationships. She discusses the choices, messages and expectations that come with them, and the question whether there is such a thing as a "free gift". She then relates this to OT terms expressing the concept of **"grace"**. Translators need to consider who gives to who, with which intent, whether voluntarily or not etc.

Ron Radke – after writing about בטח, *BṬḤ* 'trust' / 'be confident' last time – now deals with the synonym **אמן, *'MN* 'be firm/trustworthy; believe/trust'.** Put simply, in *BṬḤ*, there is the exhortation to depend on God in critical need, whereas the prominent idea in *'MN* is that of a person who is trustworthy in character and in what he says. He further argues that the central concept of "firmness" is sufficient to explain the usages of the root in all stem modifications.

Dick Kroneman presents the concept of **צֶדֶק, *ṣedeq* 'rightness'** and related terms. He explains how this word refers to meeting some norm or standard. He paves a way for translators who have to deal with this broad and foundational concept. Occurrences range from accurate weights to a judge's fair decision-making to the LORD's vindicating and redemptive righteousness.

Anne G. Kompaoré (**נער, *na'ar* 'young man'** and related terms), **Ayala Wing** (**ידה, *YDH* 'confess, acknowledge'**), and **Meg Billingsley** (**הלל, *HLL* 'praise'**) now offer complete *Discussions* on their respective terms for which the *Summaries* were already posted in the last release.

Francophone Translation Consultant Development

- Drew Maust

From July 28 to August 8, SIL Africa held the latest iteration of its biennial francophone translation consultant development event entitled DTRAD25. The goal of the DTRAD series is to encourage and facilitate the professional development of consultants at all levels. This two-week hybrid training brought together over 30 consultants and 50 CiTs (Consultants-in-Training) representing 26 countries and 20+ Bible translation organizations. SIL Togo-Benin hosted the main local hub at their center in Kara, Togo, with participants joining online individually or from local hubs across West and Central Africa.

Week 1 was devoted to technical and academic competencies and covered topics related to translation principles, biblical studies, linguistics, language technology, and the evolving role of the consultant. Audience interaction, both synchronously and asynchronously, was facilitated by Zoom, Slido and a joint SIL-UBS website called Le Coin where participants left 250+ comments on a variety of posts for discussion and reflection. During week 2, CiTs at the main hub in Kara were able to gain supervised checking experience with four local translation teams while those online discussed remote checking.

The most common takeaways in participant feedback include the importance of an attitude of service, collaboration, and humility; a consultant's strength as both spiritual (dependence on God) and relational (good connections with teams and the Church); and the need for ongoing development.

Recordings of each session will be made available on the YouTube channel of the region's training department. SIL Africa wishes to thank all the participants, facilitators, and funders who made this event a success. Preparation is already underway for DTRAD27.

Ezekiel Book Workshop Nov 2025 *- Murray Salisbury*

This three-week hybrid Ezekiel book workshop (part of the One-Book-at-a-Time series) will go from 24 Nov to 12 Dec 2025. Classes will be held Monday to Friday at 15:00 – 18:00 Israel time (13:00 – 16:00 UTC). There will be field trips for the in-person students.
The course will be led by Murray Salisbury (in the photo), SIL translation consultant and long-time student and teacher of Biblical Hebrew Poetry. Also joining Murray will be Ronit Maoz, Israeli tour guide and specialist in biblical plants and cultures, and Chris Tachick, SC translation consultant and Hebrew/OT specialist.

Ezekiel
יְחֶזְקֵאל

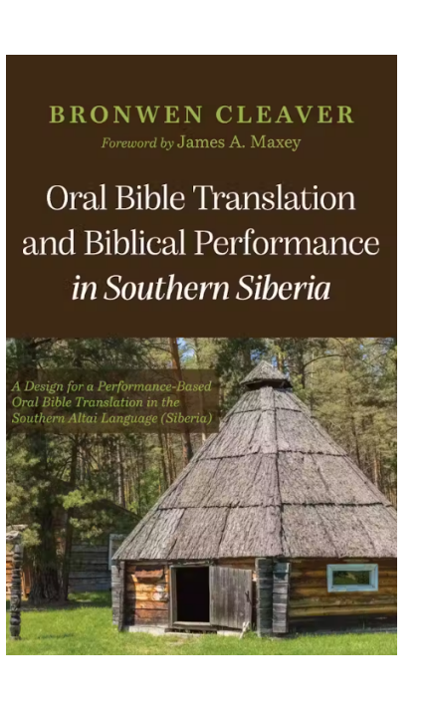
To get the most out of this course, you should have an intermediate-to-advanced level of Biblical Hebrew, as each day the students will prepare to read parts of Ezekiel in class with understanding and to answer the set questions. Click here to apply for this course. If you have further questions, email the JCBT office.

The goal of this course is to equip you with tools of exegesis and of poetry analysis that will help you make informed decisions about the most likely meaning of difficult terms and verses in Ezekiel. Translating any poetic text is not easy. Translating Ezekiel has many additional challenges, such as the strange visions of other-worldly beings and of pagan practices (back in Jerusalem) – far away from Ezekiel in Babylon.

Other challenges include the rare terminology used to describe the restored temple (chapters 40-44). We will show you multiple pictures and videos – with labels – to help you visualize the various parts of the temple and how they connect to other parts. They will also clarify whether specific dimensions refer to an item's width, depth, or length.

We'll discuss the functions of Ezekiel's poetic devices and how these might point to his intended meaning. You will learn to examine the cultural, geographical, and historical contexts. This will help you to apply much of what you learn to other Prophetic books and to other poetic parts of the Hebrew Bible.

Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia *- Bronwen Cleaver*


BRONWEN CLEAVER
Foreword by James A. Maxey
Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia

Congratulations to Bronwen Cleaver on the publication of her new book that resulted from her recent PhD dissertation.
Oral Bible Translation and Biblical Performance in Southern Siberia: *A Design for a Performance-Based Oral Bible Translation in the Southern Altai Language (Siberia).* August 2025. by Bronwen Cleaver. Foreword by James A. Maxey. 322 pages. The book is available in paperback and eBook formats from the publisher (Wipf & Stock) and major online retailers.

This book is the culmination of her work with the Altai people of Southern Siberia, exploring how to translate and *perform* biblical passages in a way that truly connects with an oral community. It presents a model for other teams to bring Scripture to life in culturally meaningful ways, moving beyond the written page to craft performances that resonate with local storytelling traditions. She explores everything from the theory of orality and performance to the practical steps of working with Altai epic singers and musicians. The goal is to show how this method makes the Bible more accessible and impactful for oral-preference learners.

This book is about designing a contextualized performance, based on biblical passages translated by oral Bible translation, to give oral-preference learners in the Republic of Altai the best possible access to Scripture. It presents a model for other oral Bible teams to translate and perform biblical texts in culturally relevant ways. The work explores key issues: the internalization process, orally translating non-narrative genres, extra-linguistic exegesis, using local poetic features in oral biblical translations, creating notes for translation teams, and integrating audience responses into the translation.

A comprehensive literature review covers orality, biblical literacy, performance criticism, functional translation, complexity theory, multimodality, and hospitality theory. Research includes interviews with oral Bible translation teams using internalization and studies of Altai epic poetry, featuring interviews with Altai epic singers and musicians. The book culminates in describing the crafting of an oral presentation based on the Altai epic story genre and its evaluation by local Altai audiences in focus groups. This demonstrates how oral Bible translation can effectively engage communities. This approach ensures that Scripture is not only translated but also communicated in a manner that resonates deeply with the cultural and oral traditions of the audience, making it more accessible and impactful.

REAP——Gathering for the Future

People flourish when provided access to resources collected, compiled, or created by SIL as part of its development, education, and Scripture engagement activities.

REAP Refreshed

- Jeremy Nordmoe

Jeremy Nordmoe (SIL Global Archives Director) announced a refreshed REAP. The SIL Archives coordinates the preservation of intellectual property and historical material resulting from SIL's development, education, and Scripture engagement activities and makes these resources available to appropriate audiences.

Work has been underway since April 2024 to migrate REAP from its original digital platform (DSpace) to a new digital platform powered by Preservica. We are pleased to announce that the 'refreshed' REAP is now available at this link. If possible in your context, we recommend accepting cookies on this site.

A new version of RAMP is also available and required for compatibility with the new REAP. More resources are linked in this document. The public facing Archives catalog (and related data) will remain online without updates while a new public site is under development. If you have any questions, please contact reap@sil.org.

Literacy & Education Position Statement

- Diane Dekker

Diane Dekker (SIL Literacy & Education Coordinator) announced a July 2025 updated Position Statement, *The importance of Literacy and Education in the Mission of SIL.* SIL values literacy as an engagement strategy because:

- We are committed to service.
- The benefits of literacy to individuals and society are many.
- We can positively impact the next generation.
- We can help speakers of non-dominant languages reach their language development goals.
- We desire to see Scriptures used to the full.
- Strategic partners see literacy as an integral part of their work and vision.

Coming Events

- 2025 - 10-23 September. Narrative Discourse Analysis for Translation. Tanzania
- 2025 - 14-16 October. Africa Oral Bible Translation Consultation. Online Consultation. Click here to register
- 2025 - 28-31 October. Bible Translation Conference 2025. Chiangmai, Thailand. Click here to register
- 2025 - 03-06 November. FLExTrans Workshop. Chiang Mai, Thailand.
- 2026 - 10 January. Biblical Discourse Conference. DIU
- 2026 - 18-21 May. EMDC. Chiangmai, Thailand.

Useful Links

- Bible Translation Consultant Competencies / YouTube channel for BT Competencies
- SIL Senior Translation Consultants
- Email the SIL International Translation Office / International Translation Services ILS page
- Join/visit the SIL Translation Resources Google Group
- Visit the public SIL.org/Translation site
- Find Translation Resources (both free download and for purchase) SIL.org/Resources/Publications
- Bamboo Project website / Journal of Translation
- Mentoring Matters website - Mentor Training Courses
- Consultant Development and Management Team
- Progress.Bible Information / Memoriam website

SIL Translation Services

International Leadership Team

- Phil King - I*TS Director & Coordinator for Translation Training and Development*
- Angeline Foo - *SIL Coordinator for Translation Research and Practice*
- Nick Peterson - *SIL Coordinator for Translation Resources*
- Kris Toler - *SIL Coordinator for Oral Translation Services*
- Viji Mathew - *Director, Global Consultant Pool*
- Brian Migliazza - *ITS Operations and Project Management*

Area Translation Coordinators

- AsiaPacific - Angeline Foo & *Greg Carlson*
- EurAsia - (To Be Confirmed)
- Africa - Drew Maust & Jonathan van den Broek
- Americas - Rick Floyd & Dwight Shaver & Dany Tasama
- GSLT - Bernadet van der Louw

Copyright © 2025 SIL Translation Services. All rights reserved.
You are receiving this email because of your interest in translation updates.
This newsletter is produced by SIL Translation Services. It contains items of interest for translation personnel within SIL and related organizations. It includes notices of upcoming conferences and workshops, announcements of recent dissertations and journal articles, and pointers to useful information related to translation.

Our mailing address is:
SIL Translation Services
SIL International
7500 W Camp Wisdom Rd
Dallas, TX 75236

Want to change how you receive these emails?
Subscribe
Update Your Preferences.
Unsubscribe